

CAP MR/DD Service Definition

Title: Augmentative Communication Devices (NO changes)

Service Definition:

Augmentative communication devices are necessary when normal speech is non-functional and/or when physical impairments make a gestural system impossible and/or ineffective. An aided system requires access to a symbolic system that is separate from the body. Selection of devices (and training outcomes for those devices) must be specific and based on age, cognitive ability, fine and gross mobility, environmental need and presence or absence of sensory impairment. These devices are recommended by a speech/language pathologist licensed to practice in the State of North Carolina and documented in the Person Centered Plan as necessary to meet the needs of the individual. The Plan also specifies who and how the individual and/or his/her family/caregiver will be trained on the use of the equipment.

This service also covers technical assistance provided to individuals in the selection and use of augmentative communication devices by qualified augmentative communication technology professionals. This assistance may not duplicate evaluation and services provided by licensed speech, occupational, and/or physical therapists. Technical assistance in the selection of augmentative communication devices will be billed through the LME under the Aug Com definition. Service and repair of purchased equipment is included when not covered by warranty.

The hardware and software needed to augment communication is divided into the following categories:

- Low technology and clinician made devices.
- High technology, commercially available dedicated devices and systems.
- Standard computer/monitors and operating peripherals.
- Computer-driven devices, operating peripherals and printers when there is substantial documentation that a computer will meet the needs of the participant more appropriately than a Communication Board.
- Communication Board Mounting Kits
- Overlay kits and accessories.
- Switches/pointers/access equipment—all types, standard and specialized.
- Keyboard/voice emulators/key guards.
- Voice synthesizers.
- Carry cases.
- Supplies (battery, battery charger).
- The cost of augmentative communication devices shall not exceed \$10,000 per waiver year per person.

Service Limitation:

- Augmentative communication devices cannot be purchased for use in the school system.
- The service may not be used to purchase cameras.

Documentation:

1. An assessment/recommendation signed and dated by a North Carolina Licensed Speech and Language Pathologist [SLP], with the SLP's license number, shall be submitted with the request. The assessment/recommendation is also signed and dated by other appropriate professionals as needed. The assessment and recommendation must be less than one year old from the date the request is received. The assessment confirms medical need for the equipment rather than educational need and identifies the person's need(s) with regard to the Augmentative Communication equipment being requested. A copy of the physician's statement certifying medical necessity shall be included with the request.
2. The request shall include clear documentation that the equipment is necessary to enable the individual to produce and engage in communication, either spoken, written, or both, in the absence of functional oral language. Information that includes the person's hearing status, visual status, physical status, access for the device requested [i.e., use of hand, visual scanning, auditory scanning, etc.], cognitive status, and primary communication method(s) shall be provided.
3. Outcomes for teaching the use of the device to the individual and his/her care providers that match the assessment results/device(s) requested shall be included.
4. When technical assistance is provided to individuals by a qualified augmentative communication technology professional in the selection of augmentative communication devices, outcomes related to the technical assistance and selection of the device must be included in the individual's Person Centered Plan.
5. The estimated life of the equipment, as well as the length of time the person is expected to benefit from the equipment, shall be indicated in the request.
6. An invoice from the supplier that shows the date the Augmentative Communication was provided to the person, and the cost, including related charges [for example, applicable delivery charges], shall be maintained by the individual's case manager.